



Cambridge AMBULANCE Chronicle, by Mike Petty

c.21.35 Ambulances

1898 03 28

Ambulance competition, p3

1900

1900 05 07

Cambridge ambulance men, p4

1910

1911 12 29

Christmas had not passed without a tragedy as the body of a woman was taken from the river at the Fort St George. She'd gone into Cambridge to fetch a plum pudding from a friend who gave her one every year, and to collect a parcel from the Ickleton carrier. Then she'd met her daughter, a ward maid at Addenbrooke's Hospital. It is thought she was going home with her parcel along the towing path when she slipped into the water – it was a very dark night – and drowned. Her body was caught on the bottom chain of Walter Pauley's ferry. Thomas Reuben Hart, photographer, of 53 Humberstone Road, applied artificial respiration as an ambulance man 11 12 29

1913 11 21

GER Ambulance Corps work

1914 09 04

The train with wounded from the front was delayed. Rooms on the Great Northern platform were converted into wards for serious cases before being taken to hospital. Outside a fleet of motor cars and tradesmen's vans converted to ambulances were ready to take the men to the First Eastern Hospital now at Trinity College. It was not easy to lift the badly-wounded men out of the carriages but stretchers were placed on luggage trolleys and wheeled slowly along the platform. There were tears in the eyes of onlookers 14 09 04 p7

1914 09 25

Nearly 200 wounded soldiers arrived at Cambridge in two specially-fitted ambulance trains. They had come straight off the hospital ship that had brought them from France; some had been travelling for four days. They lay on beds arranged in two tiers along the sides of long compartments and were carried on stretchers to the ambulance vans waiting outside the station. Quite a large crowd waiting patiently for several hours to see them arrive and give them a cheer as they were brought out.

1914 10 02

Wounded Soldiers Return. About five weeks ago, thousands of British soldiers, summoned from all parts of the United Kingdom, were under canvas at Cambridge in readiness for departure to the Front. Their destination was unknown, and it was naturally surmised by the men that they would be going to Belgium. Yesterday afternoon some of these soldiers returned to Cambridge, maimed in some cases and badly wounded in other cases. The ambulance train arrived at Cambridge about 5 p.m., and contained 130 wounded men from infantry, cavalry and artillery regiments. In 30 cases the soldiers were unable to walk, and were carried from the train on stretchers by the local members of the Voluntary Aid Detachments, and thence to Trinity College, the headquarters of the 1st Eastern General Hospital (T). Included in the wounded were men of the East and West Yorks. Regiments, Royal Fusiliers, R.H.A., Norfolks and Suffolks, and a large proportion of them were men of the Brigade which was encamped in Cambridge recently.

1914 10 23

Red Cross Society needs ambulances

1914 10 30

As motor ambulances are much needed Cambridge Red Cross have decided to hire a chassis from the Cambridge Automobile and Engineering Company and build an ambulance upon it. Other chassis have been lent by Mr Briscoe of Longstowe, Lady Inchcape and Mr Douglas Newton while Lady Waldstein has also converted one of her cars into an ambulance. These, together with those lent by Messrs King & Harper will convey wounded with increased comfort from the station to the First Eastern General Hospital.

1915 07 23

Doing His Bit in France. All will learn with much appreciation that the Rev. F. S. Lawrence, Vicar of Holy Trinity, Cambridge, is spending his holiday this year in France, aiding the French Red Cross. Mr. Lawrence has had his own private motor car converted into an ambulance car and has undertaken the work of fetching in the French wounded presumably from the firing line and conveying them to the French hospital in the Compeigne district. He expects to remain in France for about six weeks and all will wish him a safe return from "doing his bit" for the allied cause. 15 07 23

1916 03 29

Knocked down by Express. On Monday, a railway employee, Sidney Frederick Lofts, aged 19, of Thoday Street, Cambridge, was engaged in shunting operations on the G.E.R. at Barnwell Junction when he was knocked down by an up express. The down express train had just passed, and this Lofts had noticed approaching. In avoiding it, however, he did not notice the other train. A motor ambulance was telephoned for and obtained from the military hospital, the man being taken to Addenbrooke's Hospital. Here it was found necessary to amputate both legs. We were informed at the hospital, last (Tuesday) night that Lofts was going on as well as could be expected.

1916 07 19

100th ambulance train arrives – 15 07 19a

1920

1920 03 03

Unconscious—Yesterday morning an elderly man who formerly lived on the Newmarket Road, but who has lately been working away from the town, was found lying unconscious, and apparently in a fit, under a hedge at Brookfields, Mill Road. He was conveyed on the police ambulance to Addenbrooke's, where he received attention.

1920 07 17

British Red Cross Society ambulances stationed at March and Cambridge are available for anybody at charge of 1s 3d per mile

1920 07 21 Ch

British Red Cross Society motor ambulance service a boon – details – 20 07 21a

1920 10 19

Cambridge fire brigade should be under control of police and worked by permanent staff consisting of one sergeant and five constables, a reduction of one on the present permanent staff. Ten other police could act as auxiliary firemen, being paid for attending fires, ambulance calls etc

1922 02 15

Motor ambulance to replace old push ambulance which the only means the police had for dealing with street accidents and emergencies presented by special constables – 22 02 15, photo – 22 02 15a

1922 04 29

At the Grand Council of the Red Cross Society and St John Ambulance Association Mrs Hartree raised the question of the police ambulance, and said she understood that the police ambulance was to be kept in the town, and that the Red Cross Ambulance should be used for long distances. However it was seen that the Police ambulance had gone on long distances - Ipswich and Norwich. Mrs Pryor said she knew the ambulance had been used extensively at the Evelyn Nursing Home. The Chief Constable said that the objection to the Red Cross Ambulance was that it was not heated, but they had very quietly informed him that it was heated and the ambulance had been much improved lately

1924 05 10

Red Cross ambulances, p5

1924 08 04

Motor ambulance, p4

1924 09 01

Under the auspices of the Haverhill Motor Ambulance Fund provision has been made for removal of patients to Addenbrooke's Hospital by means of a motor lorry that has been adapted as an ambulance, this having been equipped with a stretcher secured in position by springs. Circumstances have arisen that have made it impossible to for this arrangement to be continued. There were two alternatives, the purchase of a new ambulance at a cost of £160 or the possibility that one might be obtained on loan from the Home Service Ambulance organisation.

1924 10 16

The new motor ambulance which is being purchased by public subscription at Haverhill was on view for several hours and inspected with interest by a large number. It is the latest single-stretcher model, with new type low Ford chassis. There are special shock absorbers fitted to all wheels, balloon tyres to the rear wheels & electric lighting throughout. A seat is provided for an attendant

1925 03 20

Cambridge Chief Constable reported that the present motor ambulance is showing signs of wear and in need of a thorough overhaul. It had travelled upwards of 13,000 miles and conveyed 1,500 patients. It had cost was £800, the chassis was second-hand. During this time £700 has been received for its use

by private persons. The committee recommended the purchase of a new motor ambulance, built by a special ambulance body builder, at a cost not exceeding £1,000.

1926 03 02

The motor ambulance service in Cambridge continues to prove of great benefit and increased demands have again been made both for accidental and private cases. An additional motor ambulance has been purchased and has proved of great assistance. The number of calls received was 701, 175 to accidents and cases of sudden illness in the streets and 526 to private removal cases. The Watch Committee have excused payment in several cases of private removals, where the persons were in necessitous circumstances. The ambulances are available at any hour of the day or night upon application to the Central Police Station or Fire Station.

1927 04 09

In view of the increasing numbers of road accidents and increased road traffic, the British Red Cross and the St John Ambulance Association are endeavouring to cover the country with road ambulance stations consisting of (a) motor ambulance stations, (b) first-aid detachment with equipment and (c) posts where a haversack of first-aid equipment will be kept. It is hoped to have the scheme running during weekends and Bank Holidays. There must be a number of young people in Cambridge who have qualified in first aid who can come forward to help in this great humanitarian work.

1930

1930 04 14

LNER ambulance corps, p8

1930 10 30

A labourer engaged in excavation work at the new Dorothy Café was killed, and another seriously injured. The men, who were employed by Coulson and Sons, were clearing the old brickwork and masonry under Hobson's Passage when a considerable mass of brickwork gave way without warning and they were smothered in the ruins. The ambulance was sent for and a crowd quickly gathered. The police had some difficulty in controlling the traffic, owing to its density at one time. 30 10 30d

1931 05 22

Dr Alex Wood of Emmanuel College is chairman of the Cambridge Peace Council. He was a Conscientious Objector exempted from active service during the Great War on condition he carried on ambulance work and became commandant of a Red Cross hospital. He joined the Labour Party and in 1926 was elected to Cambridge Borough Council. At the last general election he contested the University seat but was not successful. 31 05 22b

1931 10 02

A new luxury ambulance will soon be seen in the streets of Cambridge, replacing the older of the two Borough Police ambulances. It is an Armstrong-Siddeley fitted with self-changing gears and equipped with a wheel stretcher and Mosley 'float-on-air' bed. It is the last word in comfort with a Thermorad exhaust heater to warm the interior in cold weather and opaque glass so patients can see out. 31 10 02b

1932 09 23

Ambulance men had to carry stretchers nearly two miles through boggy fields, sometimes knee deep in swamp, before they could reach the victims of an aeroplane crash near Hauxton. The De Havilland Gipsy Moth, hired from Marshall's Aerodrome, suffered engine failure and struck the top of a tree. The journey back to the ambulance proved more difficult but was helped by a C.D.N. van driver. 32 09 23f

1933 07 18

Two Cambridge bus drivers had their lives saved by the use of new equipment acquired by the Borough Ambulance. D.G. Boyd & R.A. Doe became overcome by exhaust fumes after doing duty on the starting gang at the Hills Road garage and were removed to hospital. Boyd was revived from a state of unconsciousness through the use of the Novox resuscitation apparatus and Doe also benefited by the oxygen mixture. A conductor was also slightly affected by fumes, but quickly recovered. 33 07 18

1937 02 04

Proposed alterations to the police and fire station were opposed by councillors as it meant compulsory purchase of property belonging to St Andrews Street Baptist Church. The fire station could be moved to Maid's Causeway allowing the police space for the next 50 years. But there did need to be accommodation for constables – recently when a large number of additional men were required for emergency service the Chief Constable had to send motor ambulances and motor patrol vans to whip them up. 37 02 04a & b

1937 08 05

A.M. Morley member of Cambridge Railway Ambulance team – 37 08 05a

1937 09 13

Sir – since the beginning of the Spanish Civil War four Cambridge men have laid down their lives fighting against the Fascist Insurgents. They are John Cornford (Trinity), G.C. Maclaurin (St John's), G. Lorimer Birch (Caius) and Julian Bell (King's). The first three were in the International Column, the fourth as an ambulance driver. Now a branch of the Voluntary Industrial Aid Organisation has been established to recondition motor vehicles as ambulances for Spain. Side-car ambulances are needed that can go up the hills through narrow passes; at present wounded have to be transported by mules. Donations should be sent to me – Joseph Needham, Caius College 37 10 13

1937 11 03

Papworth Village Settlement had been acting illegally by running a bus to and from Cambridge. Journeys were varied according to need, carrying staff, patients, visiting relatives and special visitors. Patients are carried at a special rate and special journeys have frequently to be made to meet them off trains. Ambulance cases are charged according to distance. It would be impossible to carry on their work without it. Eastern Counties provided no service on four days a week and Eastern National came no nearer than Caxton Gibbet. 37 11 03

1938 05 03

Cambridge's air raid precautions are taking shape with council workers and college staff being trained in anti-gas measures and first aid. But volunteers were needed for decontamination, rescue and demolition work and 100 messengers, ambulance drivers and despatch riders were wanted. Cherry Hinton Hall would be an important centre for training and, if necessary, for a first-aid station. The greatest danger in air raids came from high explosive bombs but nothing was included about underground shelters. The Government said there is no precaution against bombing; it was the council's duty to look after the injured and see damaged buildings were taken down properly. 38 05 03 & a

1938 07 28

Plans for a new police and fire station on Parkside between Warkworth Terrace and East Road came before an Inspector. It was a central site with good access for engine and ambulances and suitable for future requirements. It comprised five houses with a pork pie factory behind. But owners, Peterhouse, did not want to sell. They were concerned about noise at night and some undesirable 'guests' at the police station reducing the value of adjacent property. 38 07 28

1939 03 28

Cambridge members of the Women's Voluntary Services for Civil Defence are being trained as ambulance and car drivers. A feature of the classes is tuition in driving in the dark in gas masks and

without lights and in changing wheels, fuses etc under the same conditions. This instruction is being given by Mr North of Messrs Marshall's, Jesus Lane. Women wishing to enrol for this important National Service should apply to the W.V.S., Old Post Office, St Andrew's Street - 39 03 28

1939 03 30

The A.R.P. First Aid post at Auckland Road will be staffed by a doctor and trained nurse and give more extensive first-aid. Two practices have already taken place. A sham air raid was enacted last night with casualties brought in by ambulance and unloaded by stretcher bearers. Nurses and orderlies under the direction of Dr Walker, dealt with them. Realism was added by squibs which were let off and red paint was used to give the impression of real wounds. 39 03 30 & a

1937 07 14

The A.R.P. exercise envisaged that an incendiary bomb had fallen on the Tivoli Cinema and no water was available from the hydrant. Within a few minutes a van-drawn Scammel pump pulled up outside. Firemen transported the pump to the riverside from which a hose was laid to a portable canvas dam near the burning building. There were four casualties – presumably usherettes, two suffering serious burns. Eighteen lorries were used as ambulances with an illuminated red cross on the front. 37 07 14a

1939 08 30

Ambulance drivers on parade- photo – 38 08 30

1939 10 11

Air Raid precautions committee have ensured that petrol supplies will be available for special services and several garages have reserved tanks and pumps for them. There are decontaminating centres at Mill Road store yard, Cherry Hinton Hall and Victoria Road. First aid depots have been set up at Shirley and other Schools with first aid parties and two ambulances. Electrically controlled sirens have been installed which together with the steam sirens should be adequate to give necessary warnings 39 10 11

1940

1940 01 17

A.R.P. Ambulance – specially-converted car – photo – 40 01 17

1940 03 08

Station "Explosion" Test.—A presumed explosion in a railway station cloakroom provided a topical setting for the practical tests for the Cambridge District Officers' Shield ambulance competitions held in Houghton Hall Cambridge, on Saturday. Six teams from L.N.E.R. stations took part and the championship was comfortably retained by March "A," who scored 338 points out of a possible 400, 204 in the team test and 134 in the individual (oral) test.

1940 05 07

Ambulance protest against condition of traffic lights at Castle Hill junction – sun light means cannot see what colour they are; several accidents – 40 05 07

1940 08 16

Duchess's Tour.—The Duchess of Gloucester visited Cambridge on Tuesday. At an emergency hospital, the whole of the nursing staff, regular and auxiliary, were lined up and inside the ward, the royal visitor talked with some of the patients, including several members of the B.E.F. back from France. On leaving the Hospital, the Duchess chatted to nurses and members of a Scottish regiment. An R.A.F. sick quarters, which is entirely nursed by the Red Cross, was the next place of call. After inspecting two of the wards, the Duchess saw a short display of surgical work by the nurses. Proceeding next to the University examination Hall, now an emergency ward of Addenbrooke's Hospital, the Duchess saw some of the American ambulance units presented to the region. After

inspecting the joint war organisation emergency hospital stores, the Duchess had tea with Sir Montagu and Lady Butler at Pembroke Lodge.

1940 09 09

American Ambulance unit stationed in Cambridge inspected – 40 09 09a

1940 12 06

St John Ambulance centre opened in Falcon Yard – 40 12 06a

1941 06 14

Lady Louis Mountbatten inspects St John Ambulance HQ, Falcon Yard – 41 06 14a

1941 12 08

Mayor Montagu Butler in serious accident during civil defence exercise; knocked down by ARP Ambulance – 41 12 08

1943 06 04

Presentation of Trophies. The end of six months hard work by members of the Cambridge Corps of the St. John Ambulance Brigade was marked by the presentation of trophies by the County Commissioner (Dr. K. S. Maurice Smith) at the Falcon Yard (Cambridge) headquarters on Saturday. Earlier in the afternoon teams from the ambulance and nursing divisions, both cadets and senior: &, took part in competitions and demonstrations at the old Post Office, where a number of visitors were interested spectators.

1944 07 15

Anglo-Soviet friendship committee send ambulance to Russia – 44 07 15

1946 02 12

Post Office launches '999' scheme – instead of '0' for calls to fire, police and ambulance – 46 02 12

1946 07 02

St John Ambulance association exhibition opened by Queen Mary of Yugoslavia – 46 07 02

1946 07 13

New Borough ambulance – cheque handed over – 46 07 13

1948 05 12

Sir - "In reply to a gaily-coloured invitation to have my eight-month old daughter immunised from diphtheria, free of charge, I took her to the Auckland Road Clinic, Cambridge. I had experience of this clinic during the war as an ambulance driver. What I found horrified me. I found makeshift surroundings completely unsuited and of dubious cleanliness and that instead of the babies being isolated at this special time the room was occupied by 20 or 30 school children, some with scabs on their faces, some with colds, some hardly clean, all waiting for treatment. I waited for half an hour from the time of my appointment and as the doctor had not yet arrived I decided not to risk the baby's health any longer in such an environment and went home. If we are to have any kind of National Health Service that will work this kind of thing will have to stop" - Margaret Phillips

1950

1950 03 01

A swifter and more efficient ambulance service is in action this week – thanks to radio control. This innovation, which has already proved its worth with the police and fire brigade, has had a successful trial with the county ambulance service. Radio control was fitted to their four ambulances and two utilicons by Pye Telecommunications and all vehicles are in constant call from the control room, newly equipped with receiver, transmitter and microphone. A number of Cambridge commercial

firms have now followed the lead of Camtax in installing radio telephones and Cambridge must be among the world's most advanced towns in the field of radio control.

1951 05 26

Sir Harold Gray of Gog Magog Hills, Cambridge, died in the South of France. He was elected Conservative MP for Cambridgeshire in 1922 but did not stand in the 1923 election. He was a noted breeder of bloodstock at his estate and for many years ran horses with considerable success. During the war Sir Harold and his wife, Rowena, worked continually in France in the hospitals for the care of the wounded and he also drove his own motor ambulance there for the French Red Cross.

1953 09 24

Marshall ambulance, p4

1954 11 25

A startling saga of the mysterious vehicle which will be used for the conveyance of nurses and laundry around Peterborough district was related at a meeting of the Hospital Board at Papworth Hall. The old vehicle had been involved in an accident and was so damaged that the cost of repairing it was too high - its scrap value was only £10. A new one was needed and it was proposed to buy a new Bedford Utecon 'All Purpose Ambulance'. But it was not clear whether they wanted an ambulance or a vehicle of another sort; members tried to explain the difference but no one seemed really clear as to the definition of 'ambulance'

1955 11 22

St John Ambulance Brigade has been given a new headquarters building in memory of the later Rev. Dr T. Fitzwilliam, President of Queens' college. It is one of the most marvellous things that has ever happened in the history of the organisation and when finally opened next year Fitzpatrick House will be something to be proud of. 55 11 22c & d

1956 09 08

The Queue to join the 'Quiet Service' – ambulance article - 56 09 08a & b & c

1956 10 30

The 162nd Field Ambulance is one of the oldest in the British Army and served with distinction in both World Wars. At one time it was the only medical unit in this part of East Anglia and in the future it would be of the greatest importance in Civil Defence at time of disaster. It has now been adopted by the City of Cambridge and the Mayor presented a plaque to commemorate the occasion. 56 10 30a

1957 01 26

Cambridge Civil Defence ambulance section carried out a successful exercise in rendering first aid to the injured. It was assumed a serious railway accident had taken place near the Eastern Gas Board sidings in Coldham's Lane. Casualties were evacuated to Swann's Yard Civil Defence Rescue Site where the Hospital Nursing Mobile First Aid Unit, under Dr C. Attwood, set up a Receiving Centre. 57 01 26

1957 04 29

Countess Mountbatten of Burma visited Cambridge to receive the gift of Fitzpatrick House in Barton Road and declare it open as the new county headquarters of the St John Ambulance Brigade. Then on Lammas Land she inspected more than 300 men, women, boys and girls who make up the Brigade and presented the Grand Prior's Badge to nursing cadet Averil Turville. 57 04 29a & b & c

1960s The Cambridgeshire Collection has newspaper cuttings files from this date

1960

Please make what use of this you may. Kindly remember where it came from – www.mikepetty.org.uk

1961 05 02

Herbert Robinson has worked as a pump attendant at the Cambridge Gas Work for ten years. He is in charge of several units which pump river water round the works and separate the various chemicals and substances which comprise coal gas. The fumes which some of the pumping houses emit are not very pleasant to smell, but Mr Robinson says it does not take long to get used to them. Married with two children, he leads the Gas Works St John's Ambulance team, teaches members of the Boys' Brigade first-aid and is keen on small bore rifle shooting. 61 05 02b

1970

1974 01 09

Ambulance work to rule, p13

1979 01 19

Ambulance strike, p1

1980

1984 07 10

A fleet of ambulances was called to evacuate 104 patients from Old Addenbrooke's Hospital after a water main burst in a ground floor room. The 240-year-old building, which is due to close in three months, has Victorian plumbing and no means could be found to deal with the burst without turning off the complete water supply. But water engineers managed to repair it. 84 07 10

1986 07 29

An 'exodus' plan has been evolved to save thousands of Cambridge families from the horrors of a nuclear disaster. The aim is to evacuate the entire city if a Chernobyl-style accident happens at the Sizewell reactor complex on the Suffolk coast. Meanwhile health chiefs have been warned they are 'sitting on a time bomb' over the ambulance service crisis. Cuts of up to 20 per cent aim at correcting a budget deficit made worse by a Government blunder. 86 07 29

1987 05 21

A Government blunder over the ambulancemen's pay award last year landed Cambridgeshire ambulance service in trouble. They'd said the award would be funded by a rationalisation of budgets throughout the country and so would be funded at no extra cost. But this did not happen, resulting in a £1m bill. There was a 90 per cent cutback in the volunteer hospital car service where management alleged some drivers were making a fortune. The resulting row led to many drivers resigning. Now an investigate reveals it is more cost-effective than running ambulances 87 05 21

1988 09 21

Frail elderly people are waiting hours for ambulances: some have been waiting at 8pm for transport home from afternoon appointments. The service was crippled by cash shortages and hopelessly inadequate for the demands placed on it, a senior Cambridge doctor claimed. It had got to improve, either managerially or by pumping more resources into it. A Director admitted the service has been cut back after running over budget and was not as good as it should be. 88 09 21

1989 03 31

Air Ambulances need funding – 89 03 31

1989 11 09

Some 100 army drivers and medics and 12 ambulances standing by ready to step into the ambulance dispute if required – 89 11 09a

1990 01 16

Ambulance dispute looms – 90 01 16